

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /119 W

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R 221055Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 465

INFO AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 JAKARTA 0918

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TAGS: PINT ID

SUBJ: MURTOPO-SUMITRO SPLIT: CURRENT ANALYSIS

REF: A. JAKARTA 06BDK B. JAKARTA 0127

1. SUMMARY: OBSERVERS ARE LINKING THE JANUARY 15-16 RIOTS IN JAKARTA TO A QUARREL BETWEEN GENERAL SUMITRO AND THE PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANTS WHICH HAS NOW BROKEN INTO THE OPEN. ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE LITTLE TRUTH IN ANY OF THE ACCUSATIONS BEING LEVELLED BY EITHER SIDE, THE VERY FACT THAT THE DISPUTE IS BEING ALLOWED TO CONTINUE IS CASTING DOUBT ON PRESIDENTIAL SUHARTO'S COMPETENCE AND UNDERMINING CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY

2. OBSERVERS OF THE INDONESIAN POLITICAL SCENE ARE ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION ATTEMPTING TO LINK THE JANUARY 15-16 RIOTS TO A PERSONNAL STRUGGLE BETWEEN DEPUTY COMMANDER OF ARMED FORCES SUMITRO AND THE PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANTS (ASPRI'S)-- GENERALS ALI MURTOPO AND SUJONO HUMARDANI. THIS EMBASSY HAS HEARD MUCH OF SUCH CONFLICT IN THE PAST AND HAS GENERALLY DOWNPLAYED
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REPORTS AS (AT BEST) EXAGGERATED. NOW, HOWEVER,

DISPUTE HAS BECOME OBVIOUS AND PUBLIC, AND IS CASTING SERIOUS DOUBTS ON PRESIDENT SUHARTO'S ABILITY TO KEEP HIS TOP-LEVEL SUBORDINATES IN LINE.

3. THE DISPUTE BECAME OVERT WITH APPEARANCE OF AN INNUENDO-LADEN ARTICLE IN JANUARY 18 ISSUE OF EKSPRES, A WEEKLY MAGAZINE WIDELY KNOWN TO BE PART OF MURTOPO'S PRESS FIEFDOM. ARTICLE (APPARENTLY WRITTEN BEFORE RIOTS) RESURRECTED THE MYTH THAT A "BERKELEY MAFIA" CONSISTING OF US-EDUCATED TECHNOCRATS HAS BEEN WORKING AS A HANDYMAIDEN OF THE CIA IN OPENING INDONESIA TO WESTERN ECONOMIC PENETRATION. IN CONTRAST, PERTAMINA'S IBNU SUTOWO AND THE ASPRI'S ARE PICTURED AS PURSING SHREWD, SELF-RELIANT, NATIONALISTIC ECONOMIC POLICIES, IN COOPERATION WITH JAPANESE CAPITAL. ARTICLE HINTS DARKLY THAT RECENT STUDENT PROTEST MOVEMENT (INCREASINGLY TARGETED AGAINST ASPRI'S) COULD BE PRECLUDE TO A CIA-BACKED COUP ATTEMPT. SUGGESTION IS MADE THAT GENERAL SUMITRO'S JANUARY 2 DISAVOW OF PRESIDENTIAL AMBITIONS (REF B) WAS NOT ENTIRELY CONVINCING, AND READER IS LEFT TO CONCLUDE THAT SUMITRO COULD BE THE KINGPIN IN A CIA-STUDENT-TECHNOCRAT PLOT.

4. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF JANUARY 19, MURTOPO'S AIDE LIM BIAN KIE FLATLY STATED THAT THE "UNREALISTIC" AIM OF STUDENTS AND THEIR BACKERS IN THE INTELLIGENTSIA (MOSTLY LINKED WITH THE OLD SOCIALIST PARTY OR PSI) HAS BEEN TO "SPLIT OFF" A FACTION OF THE ARMED FORCES BEHIND GENERAL SUMITRO TO BRING ABOUT REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES IN THE REGIME. HE HELD THE STUDENTS AND INTELLECTUALS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR INITIATING PROTESTS WHICH THEY COULD NOT CONTROL AND WHICH THEREFORE ESCALATED INTO DISASTEROUS RIOTS. HE DENIED (UNCONVINCINGLY) THAT MURTOPO DICTATES THE CONTENT OF EKSPRES AND ALLEGED THAT THE JANUARY 18 ARTICLE REFLECTS ANTI-WESTERN SENTIMENTS OF EDITOR ARIFIN MARZUKI. (COMMENT: FACT THAT MURTOPO AND HIS STRATEGISTS WOULD STOOP TO THIS CHEAP NEO-SUKARNOIST LINE SHOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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TAKEN LESS AS EVIDENCE OF GENUINE ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT THAN AS REFLECTION OF PRESENT DEPTH OF THEIR ANXIETIES AND ANTAGONISM TOWARD TECHNOCRATS AND SUMITRO. END COMMENT)

5. FOR THEIR PART, ENEMIES OF MURTOPO ARE NOW SPREADING STORIES THAT HIS AGENTS PRUPOSELY PROVOKED THE DISORDER AND THEN INSURED THAT INITIAL MILITARY RESPONSE TO IT WOULD NE INADEQUATE, IN ORDER TO LET THINGS GET OUT OF

CONROL AND THEREBY DISCREDIT AND DESTROY GENERAL SUMITRO.
THERE IS NO HARD EVIDENCE OF THIS ANY MORE THAN THERE IS
EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT MURTOPO'S CONTENTION THAT SUMITRO
HAS BEEN PLAYING POLITICS.

6. MURTOPO'S CASE AGAINST THE STUDENTS AND THE
INTELLECTUALS SEVERAL OF WHOM HAVE NOW BEEN DETAINED FOR
INVESTIGATION IN CONNECTION WITH THE RIOTS) IS
UNFORTUNATELY NOT WITHOUT A DEGREE OF CREDIBILITY. IN
WEEKS FOLLOWING SUMITRO'S TRIP TO BURU ISLAND AND HIS
ENUNCIATION OF A "NEW LEADERSHIP PATTERN" STRESSING "TWO-WAY
COMMUNICATION" HE BECAME SOMETHING OF A HERO AMONG THE
OLD PSI GROUP AND THEIR YOUNG DISCIPLES. AT THE SAME
TIME THAT THIS GROUP WAS GIVING INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL
SUPPORT TO THE STUDENTS, THEY BEGAN TO TALK OF SUMITRO
AS A MAN WITH THE NATION'S REAL INTEREST AT HEART
WHO COULD PUT THEIR REFORMIST IDEAS INTO PRACTICE,
WHATEVER HIS OTHER SHORTCOMINGS. INEVITABLY THERE WAS
MUCH LOOSE TALK ABOUT AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN SUMITRO, THE
STUDENTS AND REFORM-MINDED GENERALS, ESPECIALLY IN THE
PROVNCES, WHOSE LOYALTY SUMITOR ALLEGEDLY COMMANDS.
ALTHOUGH THE EMBASSY KNOWS OF NO EVIDENCE THAT SUMITRO
ENCOURAGED OR APPROVED OF THIS TALK, OR INDEED THAT HE
HAS BEEN ON THE SIDE OF INTELLECTUALS IN ANY WAY (EXCEPT
IN THEIR OWN MINDS), THE RESULTING ATMOSPHERE OF MISTRUST
MAY HAVE FUELED THE ENMITY WHICH CLEARLY HAS COME TO
EXIST BETWEEN SUMITRO AND MURTOPO.

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7. AN EVEN MORE FUNDEMENTAL CAUSE OF CONFLICT HAS BEEN MURTOPO'S JEALOUSY OF THE TECHNOCRATS DOMINATION OF THE PLANNING FIELD, AND TECHNOCRATS INCREASING RESENTMENT OF ASPRI'S INFLUENCE PEDDLING. THIS RESENTMENT HAS BEEN PICKED UP AND AMPLIFIED BY STUDENT CRITICS WHO HAVE MADE THE ASPRI'S AND THEIR CHINESE STAFFMEN INTO SYMBOLS FOR WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE SYSTEM, OR AS THEY TERM IT, THE "INEVITABLE FORCE" THAT SUBSTITUTES PERSONAL PROFIT FOR NATIONAL INTEREST IN THE DECISION-MAKING EQUATION. ONCE AGAIN IT IS ANYTHING BUT SLEAR THAT GENERAL SUMITRO HAS IN FACT BEEN ON THE SIDE OF THE STUDENTS AND TECHNOCRATS IN THIS ARGEMENT, ALTHOUGH MURTOPO SEEMS TO THINKUHRO.

8.IT IS EVEN LESS CLEAR WHERE IBNU SUTOWO STANDS IN THE RIFT BETWEEN SUMITRO AND THE ASPRI'S. IT IS NOW WELL KNOWN THAT IBNU SHARES THE ASPRI'S STRONG ANTIPATHY FOR THE TECHNOCRATS BECAUSE OF THEIR EFFORTS TO REGULATE PERTAMINA'S AFFAIRS. THERE WERE SEVERAL REPORTS IN 1973 THAT SUMITRO HWN TRIED, BUT FAILED TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED TO OVERSEE PERTAMINA'S AFFAIRS. AND IBNU REPORTEDLY TOLD A RELIABLE AMERICAN SOURCE THAT THE JAKARTA CONFIDENTIAL

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RIOTS MEANT THE "END OF SUMITRO." NONE OF THIS NECESSARILY MEANS THAT THERE IS A SERIOUS CONFLICT BETWEEN IBNU AND SUMITRO, OR THAT IBNU IS MAKING COMMON CAUSE WITH THE ASPRI'S IN AN ANTI-SUMITRO CAMPAIGN AS ALI MURTOPO HAS BEEN SUGGESTING.

9. THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS FROM SEVERAL SOURCES THAT SOME WEEKS BEFORE TANAKA'S ARRIVAL PRESIDENT SUHARTO PERSONALLY ORDERED HIS SUBORDINATES TO STOP AQUABBLING WITH EACH OTHER. IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT IF THIS EFFORT INDEED TOOK PLACE, IT WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL. THE QUARREL HAS CONTINUED AND IS BEING EXACERBATED BY THE MUTUAL RECGEMINATION AND BLAME-CASTING WHICH HAVE INEVITABLY FOLLOWED THE RIOTS. SOME OBSERVERS STILL HOPE THAT SUHARTO MAY SEE FIT TO REMOVE EITHER MURTOPO OR HUMARDANI OR BOTH (THE TWO ARE STILL WORKING TOGETHER) AS A SOP TO REFORMIST SENTIMENT. HOWEVER IT SEEMS MORE LIKELY THAT SUMITRO HAS (AT THE VERY LEAST) LOST THIS ROUND, AND PERHAPS LOST FOR GOOD. WE SHOULD KNOW IN THE NEXT MONTH OR SO.

10. AT PRESENT WE CAN ONLY NOTE THAT THE DISPUTE IN CONTINUING, WITH SERIOUS NEGATIVE EFFECTS. AT THE VERY LEAST IT INDICATED THAT AFTER FIVE YEARS OF REMARKABLE TOP-LEVEL HARMONY SUHARTO HAS BEEN UNABLE TO PRECENT A SERIOUS, PUBLIC SCHISM FROM DEVELOPING BETWEEN TWO POWERFUL LIEUTENANTS. THIS IN TURN SUGGESTS TO INDONESIA'S POLITICALLY AWARE PUBLIC THAT UNITY IN THE ARMED FORCES, BY FAR THE MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE FACTOR IN THE MAINTENANCE OF POLITICAL STABILITY, MAY BE IN SOME DANGER.

11. AS NOTED ABOVE, WE HAVE SEEN NO HARD EVIDENCE THAT THE ARMY IS IN FACT ITSELF ALLOWING TO BE DIVIDED INTO WARRING CAMPS. THE TARDY AND INEFFECTIVE RESPONSE OF SECURITY FORCES TO THE RIOTS CAN BE EXPLAINED BY FACTORS WHICH HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE MURTOPO-SUMITRO DISPUTE, SUCH AS INADEQUATE PREPARATIONS AND FEAR OF OVERRACTION (SEE REF A). AS USUAL THE FRICTION BETWEEN MURTOPO AND SUMITRO IS BEING EXAGGERATED BY RNMKARTA'S RUMOR MILLS WHICH ARE NOW WORKING OVERTIME. NEVERTHELESS, THIS TIME THE FRICTION IS UNDENIABLY THERE, AND THE MERE SUGGESTION
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OF DISUNITY WITHIN THE MILITARY IS PROFOUNDLY DISTURBING TO THE POLITICAL CLIMATE. UNLESS PRESIDENT SUHARTO HAS COMPLETELY LOST HIS INSTINCT FOR PERSONAL LEADERSHIP, WHICH SEEMS URMKELY, HE WILL MOVE TO RESOLVE THIS PROBLEM BEFORE MUCH LONGER. UNTIL HE DOES SO, IT WILL CONTINUE TO WEAKEN PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN HIS LEADERSHIP AND CAST DOUBT ON HIS EFFECTIVENESS.
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